

The Mysterious Ways of Wang Foo. *By Sidney C. Partridge.*

The Crystal Globe

"GENTLEMEN, you can take my word for it, the Chinese are the very best and easiest people in the world to trade with if you only understand them and are willing to do an honest business with them," remarked Wilson Gregg of the Great Western Trading Company to an interested group of visitors sipping their afternoon tea on the verandah of the Hong-kong Hotel. "I've been dealing with them off and on for over twenty years and I know what I am talking about. You've got to have a first-class article to start with, and the goods must always be up to the samples, for if they once suspect that you are lowering your standard you are gone. Then you've got to have a nice-sounding chop or trade mark that they can easily pronounce and that has some good luck in it to gratify their little superstitions, and, lastly, you have got to have a fair fixed price that you never under any circumstances vary from, and the trade and goodwill of the Chinese are yours. Now, Dr. Burroughs, you've lived a long time among them and speak their lingo and all that and know them even better than I do," he said, turning to the mission surgeon, who had just joined the party. "You'll bear me out in this statement, I am sure, won't you?"

"With pleasure, Mr. Gregg," replied the surgeon; "you have stated the case very accurately, and I congratulate you upon your grasp of the situation. Unfortunately, a great many European and American merchants fail to understand these points in the Chinese nature, and consequently they allow the trade to slip right through their hands. In the years that I have been here I could give you a long list of the firms from abroad who have come out here and flourished for a little while and then gradually their custom has fallen off and passed into the hands of others, and they have finally given up in disgust and gone home."

"They've developed a very bitter feeling against the natives and say it is impossible for any decent European to deal with them, and all that, when all the time it was simply their own fault and no one else's. If they had really understood the nature of their customers they could not only have kept the trade, but have had it grow larger every year. However, this is a very large subject, this matter of international trade, and if I should go into it to any extent I am afraid I should keep you gentlemen here all the rest of the day."

"You spoke of the trade mark or 'chop,' Mr. Gregg," interrupted one of the tourist group. "I have heard it said that this is really the all-important point with the Chinese and that a wisely chosen and popular chop really goes further with them than even the quality of the goods. Have you found that this is so?"

"Well, I should hardly say that it was the most important thing, but it certainly goes a very long way with them toward selling the goods, doesn't it, Dr. Burroughs?"

"It most certainly does. But, as I said a moment ago, this is a very large subject—it would fill a volume in itself—and the full story of it has never yet been written for Europeans. I may say, however, as an indication of the value that they place upon it, that a large Chinese firm will spend days and weeks of time and many hundreds of dollars, if necessary, in selecting just the right chop for an article before placing it on the market."

"It practically corresponds, then, to careful and elaborate advertising in our countries, doesn't it?"

"Yes, and it practically takes the place of public advertising, which the Chinese do not care very much about. Let me give you just one little illustration of the value of a name in a case that came under my own observation a few years ago. The lamp trade, as you all know, is one of the most important in this country, and with the lamps, of course, there goes a great importation of chimneys and globes. There is naturally not very much variety in the matter of the chimneys inside, but there is an endless variety of choice in the outside globes, because these, in the native mind, correspond to the glazed paper coverings of their old-fashioned lanterns, about which they are very particular. Now there happened to be

two English dealers in glassware in the very same block on Queen's road, and both of them filled their windows and showcases with the handsomest patterns of lamps and shades. At first the tide of native customers seemed to flow about evenly into the two establishments, but gradually the gentleman on the left, whom we will call 'Brown,' found his list of customers growing shorter and shorter, while his neighbor and rival, whom we may call 'Jones,' rubbed his hands in delight at the sight of the constantly increasing number of his patrons. Their stock in trade was so nearly alike and the arrangement of the goods in their windows so very similar that the European mind was at a loss to account for the shifting of the tide, especially as the prices were identically the same."

"What, then, was the secret?" inquired our tourist on behalf of a much interested and listening circle. "Why, it was simply this," replied the surgeon with a smile: "Brown was content to have the large Chinese sign in the window simply say in its golden characters, 'Crystal Globes,' while Jones, who had been wise and crafty enough to consult an old missionary on the subject, advertised his wares by the striking title of 'Dragon Bubbles.'"

"Well, what of that? What could the difference signify? Why should they run after bubbles rather than crystals? Is it simply because they are human like the rest of us and, as the poets and philosophers tell us, we all spend our lives really in chasing bubbles?"

"Oh, no, that's the western idea—not, the eastern—and you mustn't make the popular mistake of putting occidental thought and reason into the oriental brain, for that's what causes three-quarters of all the trouble between them. The difference lies just here: A globe of crystal or glass is to the Chinese mind simply a piece of inanimate and material nature, a cold, dead and lifeless thing like the rock or sand from which it comes—beautiful and attractive, but not alive or capable of communicating life or any attendant blessing to mankind. On the other hand, the bubble formed from the foam in the mouth of the dragon—himself the king of nature and embodiment of all its forms of life—is not only a beautiful and living thing in itself, but conveys to its fortunate possessor the vivifying qualities of all the animal kingdom. So you see, to have hanging from the ceiling a lamp-globe that bears the name of the 'dragon bubble' would convey infinitely more good luck to a native home than all the 'crystal globes' in the world!"

"Remarkably interesting and clever story, that!" exclaimed Maj. Perkins from Bombay, as he laid down his cheroot and drew out of his pocket a notebook. "I'll just jot it down here at once before I forget it. By Jove! You can learn something new here every day, just as you can in India, don't you know. 'Dragon Bubbles.' Very good! Very good! I'll not forget that in many a day, not I. And now, gentlemen, as it's a very warm afternoon, I suggest we all have a little liquid refreshments and imagine we see genuine dragon bubbles sparkling on the soda, eh?"

He rang the bell for the boy, but before giving him the order for the liquids he thought he would just get



BEFORE THE EXCITED PRIEST COULD STOP HIM HE FLOODED THE ROOM WITH A TORCHLIKE GLARE.

his view on the subject, and so he said: "Boy, you can savvee dragon bubble?"

"Yes, my can savvee."

"Talkee him b'lorigee velly good joss, eh?"

"Chineeman talkee him number one good joss."

"You thinkee Hong Kong side can catchee?"

"S'possee some piecee joss-house makee sell glassees, look see all samees. Chineeman he buy, no can get house fire, no can get sick gettee plenty lich, can catchee cash buy licee."

"General protection all around, eh?"

"My savvee joss-man he talkee so fashion—some piecee man talkee all same fool pidgin."

"Well, hurry up the sodas now, boy, and have them cold and sparkling."

After the ever-popular and refreshing beverage of the far east we little party broke up and wandered off toward the tennis club and the boathouse, the two favorite cooling-off spots of the colony. They had not noticed at all a quiet Chinese gentleman now had sat in a large wicker-work chair just beyond them on the verandah, and who, although apparently deeply absorbed in the mysterious contents of a native volume, had been a most interested listener to all their conversation. After the last one had departed he rang the bell for the boy, and addressing him in his native tongue, said: "At what temple on the island are they selling the dragon bubbles now?"

"The elder-born asketh well, but the ignorant little servant knoweth not."

"You told the foreigner just now that you knew, for I distinctly heard you."

"The honorable elder-born must have misunderstood the question of the ocean-man."

"Not at all; I understood it perfectly."

"Great and august is the learning of the elder-born that he understands the language of the ocean-man so easily."

"Waste not thy flowery terms on me, nor scatter jade-stone compliments in the pathway of the Sages' humblest scholar," replied Wang Foo, the famous Man of Mystery, as he took the boy into the furthest quiet corner of the veranda and, opening out the Japanese screen that stood there, concealed them both from the eyes and ears of all observers. He seized him by both wrists and, holding him with the grip of a vise, looked straight into his eyes and said: "Ah Ling, I know exactly who you

are. You are from Pow Tai village across the bay, for your accent tells it. The information that I want is for the Mandarins. You know the native proverb well: 'Keep out of the clutches of the law!' Now tell me at once what I want to know, or before the moon is three days older the wooden cangue will be about thy neck." He tightened his grasp on the wrists of the trembling Ah Ling, who now was wriggling like an eel—

"You know it, tell me quick!"

"I do not know; I do not—"

"Liar! You do. Which temple is it? Quick or I will—"

The houseboy fell upon his knees, gasping as he did so: "Yuek Tai Tai, Yuek Tai Tai" (the Moon Goddess, the Moon Goddess). But spare me, O merciful master, for the vengeance of the Queen of the Night follows those who reveal her secrets."

"You are protected on condition of absolute silence until we meet again."

Meanwhile Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin, the parents, were driven almost to distraction by the news of the loss of the child and the conjuring up of every terrible suspicion regarding the disposing of him. The frantic mother kept crying out: "They will kill him! They will kill him! My darling boy, they will drown him, they will burn him! I shall never see him again!" But her condition, heart-broken as it was, was really no more pitiable than that of the poor Chinese amah, who, rolling on the nursery floor in paroxysms of uncontrollable grief, kept shrieking: "Take me! Take me! Stab me, kill me, eat me if you wish, but bring back my boy." There was no more faithful or devoted native servant in the entire community, and it was no exaggeration to say—and the oldest residents well knew it to be true—that she would willingly have given her life to have saved the child, for such things have actually happened in the history of European life in the far eastern world.

Of course a large reward was immediately offered for the apprehension of the thieves and the return of the child. Sir Wayne-Evington, the Governor of Hongkong, called personally with Lady Evington at the Goodwin residence and after tendering his sympathy and promising every assistance on the part of the authorities, headed the subscription list with a very handsome sum, which was multiplied a great many times by the amounts offered by the various societies and organizations in the colony. It was remarkable to see how the tragic event drew out the sympathy of the entire populace, without any distinction of race, creed or nationality. The consuls of all the different countries, officers of the garrison and of the naval and mercantile marine, the bishop and all the various missionaries, the heads of the Mohammedan and Parsee guilds, either called in person or sent their cards and kindest inquiries. It surely was the little "touch of nature that makes the whole world kin." But among all those who expressed their horror at the occurrence and hastened to tender their sympathy and assurances of help none surpassed the Chinese themselves. The consul came in person with all his staff, and he was followed by the heads of the various guilds and firms and leading citizens of the native community, who vied with each other in expressing their detestation of the crime and requested the privilege of being allowed to subscribe to the reward.

Among the first of the red cards to be presented by a native servant at the Goodwin door was that of Wang Foo, the detective, who accompanied it by a personal note of assurance that he would leave no stone unturned in his efforts to co-operate with the authorities and to bring the villains to justice, and begging Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin—which many others had forgotten to do—not to give up hope of securing the child's return until every effort had been exhausted. In accordance with the foregoing promise, he called at once at the department of police and on being ushered into Inspector Wallace's private office greeted him with: "Mr. Inspector, this is the time when I have anticipated you. My general custom, as you know, is to wait till the department sends for me and requests my services, but this is a case that touches the whole community so vitally—and one, I may say, in which we all feel that we cannot help too willingly or too promptly—that I have taken the liberty of coming down here at once to offer my services to the authorities. In other words, as you say in England, 'I am yours to command.'"

"Well, Mr. Wang, you certainly were never a more welcome visitor at this office. Please take a seat and help yourself to a cheroot out of the new box there." The inspector rose and closed the doors and windows—his customary precaution when anything of a specially private nature was to be discussed in the office. He then continued: "You have read the account in the papers; now, what is your theory? Is it a case of kidnapping or of simple 'disappearance' as the reports call it? Where is the little chap and who spirited him away? What is your solution?"

Wang Foo removed his round Chinese cap and laid it on the table (this he would not have done in a Chinese presence, but he sometimes allowed himself what he called his "European privilege" when he was alone with a friend from the west); it seemed to relieve the pressure on the brain and enabled him to pass his right hand two or three times across his brow as if to rub away the

A day or two after the scene between Wang Foo and the hotel boy the whole community of Hong Kong was thrown into a state of the most intense excitement by the report that a European child had been kidnapped! Little Bennie Goodwin, the four-year-old child of Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin of Victoria Terrace, had disappeared from the care of his amah while playing with some other European children in Cricket Ground Park, and not a trace of him could be found. They were too far away from the water's edge for him to have fallen into the harbor, and as it was only a minute or two before he was missed he could not have wandered down any of the neighboring streets. The police, who were diligently assisted in their search by the naval and military authorities—to say nothing of the scores of civilians who hurried to offer their services to the department—were therefore reluctantly driven to the conclusion that the child had wandered away for a moment into the roadway and there had been suddenly seized and thrown into some passing jinrikisha or sedan chair by the kidnapers, and was now being concealed in some outlying section of the colony and probably held for a ransom.

headache or the wrinkles. He looked up after a moment and answered: "Mr. Wallace, I have no solution whatever—that is, as yet. I never have at first, you remember. Like the sign in Weston's drug store around the corner, I may say, 'I take time and care in preparing all my solutions'. I expect to begin some of these chemical brain processes tonight, however, and you may hear from me in a day or two. In the meantime I shall be grateful to you for a copy of the case as you have drawn it up, if you can spare it."

"This is the only one I have—take it and return it promptly, please."

"You shall have it back safe and sound before the office opens in the morning, sir," replied the Prince of Detectives, as he accepted a roll of documents, gratefully, from the inspector. "And, remember, if anything turns up during the night and you need my help, just send for me without a moment's hesitation. Your head chair-coolie knows my house very well, and I will see that Old Chang the gatekeeper, sleeps with one ear open to listen for possible midnight knocks."

"Thank you, Mr. Wang, and remember I shall look eagerly for that solution of yours tomorrow or next day. I am very anxious to know how it will fit in with mine."

"With yours? By the way, what is yours in a word? Was the report in the evening paper correct?"

Quite so, sir; it seems to be a clear case of kidnaping and very carefully planned and carried out, as most of them are. The villains evidently knew all about the daily life of the family and the exact time when the amah would bring the child to the park, and while she was chatting and gossiping with the other amahs, as they always do, they evidently enticed the child out to the road for an instant and tossed him into a waiting sedan-chair and rushed him off. It must have been a sedan because you see that is closed, while a jin-rik-sha is all open and they would surely have been seen. We shall probably get some anonymous letters tomorrow demanding a fabulous ransom and threatening to mutilate the poor child in some way if we don't pay up. It's awful to think of, but 'bandits is bandits,' as Morehouse says,

whether they're in Italy or China. However, we hope for the best. Good-night, Mr. Wang."

"Good-night, sir, and many thanks for the solution, which will be helpful to me in compounding mine."

It was late in the evening when the old abbot from the Temple of the Queen of Heaven arrived at Wang Foo's residence and passed at once into the upper chamber where the Man of Mystery was waiting to receive him. Old Chang brought up the tea and pipes and after the preliminary warming-up they proceeded at once to the subject before them.

"Are there any new developments since the morning," asked the master of the temple.

"None that I know of," replied the host. "See, here is the inspector's report, containing everything as far as they have gone. I will read it over to you, translating as I go," suiting the action to the word. "Now, what do you think of it?"

"Well, it is the natural conclusion of the western mind. The inspector feels that is the way it would have been done in Europe and consequently the way it has been done in China—but that does not follow at all, as you very well know. I can recall but one case of kidnaping of a foreign child in all the long years that I have lived in Hongkong, and that was done by a gang of drunken Portuguese sailors who were ashore on a spree and who carried the child away to the ship more for a lark than for anything else. No, no, it requires too much care and trouble and expensive preparation—for they always require well-paid confederates—and the risk of exposure and detection is far too great for the ordinary gang of thieves and villains to undertake it. Of course, there have been stealings of native children, but that is a very different proposition. I do not believe this is a case of kidnaping at all—that is simply a theory and nothing more—there is not a grain of evidence to prove it or even suggest it. Had there been, you may be sure that the amount of the reward would have already tempted some one of the party to turn state's evidence, for the walls are covered with the posters and thousands of handbills have been printed and distributed through the

native quarter. The child has disappeared and we must find him, that is all."

"Yes, Venerable Father," answered the detective thoughtfully, "that is all, as you say, but it is a very puzzling and complicated 'all.' We do not seem to have even the shadow of a clue, and there is nothing for us to do but to wait as the English say, until something or somebody turns up. By the way, you know that our old friend, the cross-eyed priest at the Temple of the Moon Goddess, is up to another money-making scheme?"

"What! Old 'Cross-sights' at it again? What is it now? A miracle of some kind, I warrant. Jewels falling from heaven or something of that kind?"

"Well, you hit it very nearly; it isn't jewels from heaven this time, but it's the next thing to it. The sacred foam from the mouth of the heavenly creature is being sold for medicine under the old name of 'dragon bubbles'. He's keeping it very quiet and only selling it to the inner circle now—for fear the local Mandarin will want a heavy commission—but he is making a good thing out of it, as I accidentally learned from the hotel boy, who I believe acts as his local agent for the devotees in the colony. I am going across the Bay to the temple tomorrow to make a personal investigation and see whether it is serious enough to report to the Tao-Tai. I will report to you in the evening."

"It is well, it is well that you go, and may the blessings of all the Buddhas be with you!" was the farewell benediction of the old visitor as Wang Foo bowed him out to his waiting sedan-chair.

The following morning Old Chang accompanied his master as far as the Central wharf, where he took the steam ferry for the opposite side of the bay, and having safely landed at Kow Loon, engaged a sampan with a sail to take him to the second inlet beyond, where a well-worn road of stone led up to the Temple of the Moon Goddess. Disguised as a wandering old peddler of books, he attracted no notice from the temple attaches nor did his presence at the inner shrine—into which he had gradually forced his way—arouse the least suspicion on the part of Old Cross-

sights, who was there in person arranging little pyramids of glass balls in front of the gilded wooden figure of the goddess.

"Venerable father," he said with a carefully assumed air and tone of rural and unsophisticated innocence, "what may these treasures be that you are hoarding so carefully?"

"These are none other than the foaming bubbles from the mouth of the dragon king. The grandest and most potential medicine that ever came to mortal man. Stir but one of them in a basin of boiling water it will dissolve into a thousand fragments and he who drinks of the precious fluid that remains will be blessed with all the virtues ten and protected from every ill that mortal flesh is heir to. These little globes are the children of the great parent globe that hangs yonder above the goddess' head—the crystallized bubble of the sacred foam. See! It has a thousand—"

He stopped abruptly in the middle of the sentence, startled at a cry that seemed to come from the inner room behind the shrine. He dropped the last globe that he held in his hand, shivering it into pieces on the temple floor, and with a wild shriek drew aside the sacred curtain and rushed into the dark space beyond. Wang Foo followed close behind him and, drawing a bunch of matches from his pocket case, suddenly struck them and before the excited priest could stop him, he flooded the room with a torchlike glare. Why did he start back? What was the sight that met his eyes? What was it lying there upon the matting? A child. A European child. Pushing the priest roughly aside, he seized the little figure in his arms and dashed backward with it into the daylight. Yes. One of the greatest surprises, but one of the most joyful experiences of his life, there, soiled and dirty, hungry and thirsty, but absolutely unharmed, was the lost child for whom the whole island of Hong Kong was searching.

"Who brought him here?" he asked in excited tones of the now thoroughly frightened priest. "Tell me, you cross-eyed villain; tell me quick."

"They brought him, they brought him in the boy—," he stammered out. "He carried me the sacred crystal in his hands—the dragon bubble, the dragon bubble! He was the messenger of the goddess."

Terrifying the priest and his at-

tendants and holding them back at the point of his revolver, Wang Foo retreated down the stone roadway to the water and, finding a sampan waiting, he deposited his tired burden on the mats and ordered the coolie to row for all his life to Kow Loon.

In less than an hour Mrs. Goodwin was clasping her lost Bennie to her heart and all the colony of Hong Kong was rejoicing with the happy parents.

* * * *

In the statement which Wang Foo made to the inspector and his deputy that evening he explained the disappearance and the mysterious finding in the temple across the bay. It seemed that Bennie, playing with some other children in the park, left them and wandered off by himself alone to the driveway. Just as he appeared there two old coolies, carrying a large empty box on a bamboo, stopped to rest and smoke. As often happens, they were so tired that, before they knew it, they had fallen asleep on the grass by the roadside. The child, seeing the empty box and thinking to play 'hide and seek' with his fellows, had climbed into it and pulled the cover over on himself, and while hiding there the coolies had picked him up and carried him along. Noticing the difference in the weight, they had put the box down at the corner of the street and, uncovering it, had discovered Bennie within. Their first thought was to lift him out and summon assistance, but—and here is the strange part of it all—seeing the English policeman approaching and hearing him calling them to move on, they became thoroughly frightened and, covering the box over again, picked up the bamboo and hurried away with all speed to the water. Fearing further trouble here, they jumped into a sampan with their burden and started across the bay.

"Let us take him to the Temple of the Moon and put him under the protection of the goddess," they said, and so to the temple they went and presented the child to the priest, who swore them to secrecy and sent them back with the empty box.

"But what made old cross-eyes think he was bringing the dragon bubble?" asked the inspector.

"Why," answered Wang with a significant smile, "Bennie was carrying a glass ball in his hand which his amah had given him to play with."

(Copyright, 1919.)

THE LETTERS OF PATRIOTIC POLLY, A WAR WORKER

LISTEN, Daddy:
Good-by market! Good-by
smell!
Good-by Greeks and the
fruit you sell!

That's what the girl next to me is humming, because we move today. It's almost too good to be true. None of us are busy, and I am taking this time to write to you, borrowing a piece of stationery with the Treasury's coat-of-arms in the corner.

I have always thought that moving was strenuous business, but not the way the government does it. We girls do not have a thing to do. This morning when we came down we were issued labels, having on them a room number, a spot number and our number. These we pasted on our chairs, waste baskets and pie cases. Those last things sound out of place in a museum, don't they, but they are only form letter holders that have had that nickname so long that no one knows what else to call them. The idea of the label is for the men to know where to deliver the goods, and for us to know where to report tomorrow morning. We must go to room No. 344, hunt spot No. 18 and put ourselves on our own number in that spot. Very simple, is it not?

Everybody is happy over leaving here but me. I thought I was, too, yesterday. Today I have been thinking over what a funny fascinating place this museum is. I'll never work in another like it, and the fact that our days in it are numbered is the surest sign of peace that we war riskers have. Such things as wandering around the rotunda and looking down at the workers below, seeing, above the wall protections, the bones of our prehistoric ancestors, facing unexpectedly through an opening a beautifully lighted picture—all such things do take the drudgery out of work. For a month cages of Indian relics have circled the round corridor. Whenever I went to telephone I snatched along between samples of Indian squaws' fancy work, and while I waited for the operator to listen for my nickel I enlightened myself on early American art as displayed in red baskets and clay bowls. Also, Dad, we have found a secret passageway to the lobby. We turned working into a game of living in a French castle surrounded by Germans. We made our escape every afternoon by going down, at closing time, slippery steel stairs, racing down a dimly lighted corridor, then turning the corner into a hall the walls of which were lined with faded old canvasses



IF NOTHING MORE EXCITING WAS ON HAND.

in dull tones—a Franz Hals face leering from the shadows, or a Murillo angel covered with cobwebs. At the end a white-haired old guard (I mean family attendant) always arose with a stately bow and bade us good-night as he opened the door. We were then comparatively safe—only the shining expanse of the lobby to cross. And the game was over as we became a part of the thousands pouring onto B street.

Another reason I hate to leave is because of the market. Since I have learned to shop in it, I have such a friendly feeling toward it, the kind I have for our old tamale man who does not look at all presentable, but does sell the best tamales. If it weren't for my spring suit, I might never have discovered the thrills of marketing. After you sent me the cape I did not want to ask you to pay a suit-bill, too, so I thought I would earn the money for it. I had saved \$15 in February, and I figured that by an elimination of everything except B. and R. (board and room) I could save \$60 out of my March salary and get a suit that I would not be ashamed to wear home when I decided to go.

The next day at work I was puzzling over the lunch problem—how to reduce it. You see I stopped bringing my lunch long ago, not only because I could sleep twenty minutes later if I did not have to prepare it, but also because I was tired of belonging to the paper-bag brigade. One day when

a man's umbrella knocked my lunch out of my hand and scattered sandwiches, cake and fruit all over the Avenue, I was so humiliated that I vowed I would never swing another paper bag. But, after all, that is the cheapest kind of a good lunch. The only cafe, in this museum trio, does not cater to the appetite of \$1.240 girls who want \$75 suits. Some girls at my table told me how three or four of them had bought food in bulk at the market and saved that way while we were discussing our financial troubles. Their plan sounded well, like more to eat for the small sum I limited to than anything else I knew. So we tried it. I enjoyed nosing around the counters, asking very importantly, in the tone of a housewife: "For how much will you sell three slices of ham?" or "How many bananas for a dime?" or "Are your cakes fresh?" And we really saved.

We never bought more than we could eat at one time, for we were not allowed to keep food over night in the museum. But for, from 40 to 45 cents a day, we had a loaf of bread sliced, cottage cheese, cakes and fruit. One nice man always let us have three apples for a dime. You see, that was lunch for three at the price paid by one at a cafe, and split up, it meant a suit for Polly, a trip home for one of the other girls and a perfectly wonderful anniversary present for the mother of the other. I have reduced the H. C. of L.—that expression always reminds me of hydro-

chloric acid, and they are very much alike—eating holes in things, pocket-books and all—in a few other ways. I abstained from peanut bars, which I used to buy every recess to keep me from getting faint. I shut my eyes to the cry of the newsboys, and my eyes to the lure of the magazine stands. Bonnie always buys a paper, though. She has a very motherly attitude to all the little fellows; to her they are city life in a concentrated form. Her pet extravagance is paying a nickel for a newspaper and then asking the newsboy if he has a warm place to sleep.

Oh, well, I get paid today, and so I am going down after my suit. I selected it and paid the fifteen on it to have it put away for me. It is just what I want. I would have lived on bread crumbs, almost, to get it. I may live on them, yet, because after I pay for it, I shall not have much to live on, or read on, until I get my next check.

The last reason I do not want to leave is because there will not be anything to do over there at noon except eat. These museums—the old one, the new one and the Smithsonian Institution—are like a three-ring circus, with plenty of little side-shows. In the lunch-bringing days we used to go over and wander around, looking at Chinese pagodas, Mesdames Presidents' costumes and Benjamin Franklin's printing press to the tune of a ham sandwich and a piece of pie. It was my favorite combination, because it made me forget what I was eating. Then there were the agricultural buildings. I took Priscilla, my New York state chum, over to introduce her to a native of my state, Mr. Cactus, and I found some varieties there which I had never met myself. Recently they had an amaryllis show, and we, along with the wives of the cabinet and other distinguished women, saw the gorgeous display of South American color. Nearer home there were always some recruits out under the trees training under the tutelage of several officers. We watched them stab firewood Germans and do semaphore signs until we almost learned the alphabet in arm language. If nothing more exciting was on hand, we strolled over the grass, throwing nuts to the squirrels and letting the good old sunshine make our dispositions sunny.

THREE DAYS LATER.

Daddy, guess what happened to your letter? I was interrupted when the supervisor came around with our checks. After that we were dismissed

and without thinking, I shoved your letter into some of my folders, snapped a rubber band around it and put it away to be delivered to the new building. It took an hour's searching to find it today, so I shall finish it while I am waiting for something to do.

We are not settled exactly yet, though we have been trying to get into shape for three days. The spot idea did not work. It would have if people were like pieces of furniture—would stay where they are put. But no one liked his number, and some of the heads did not like the spots. Considerable confusion resulted from getting every one near the proper amount of light, away from the noise of the typewriter or near friends, but now it looks as if most of us are satisfied and willing to work. All of us means about 10,000, Daddy. It has taken several weeks of hauling to get everything in. The big Treasury trucks have been loading up all over the city and dumping their contents at the 17th and Vermont.

Perhaps I shall like it after all. If historic location can make up for the museum exhibits, I shall. The building is separated from the White House grounds by Lafayette Square and diagonally across from it is Dolly Madison's house, while Andrew Jackson's is only a square up, on 17th street. It is a funny old place, resembling our adobe houses. I do not think that I shall miss the market after all. There are so many little inns near and dozens more springing up. We are going to one today for lunch. I can not imagine how it will feel to sit down and eat like a respectable person at noon time.

Oh, Dad, Nan has gone! She left yesterday. She could have stayed until the 5th, but she had everything ready and her resignation went into effect on the 31st. We felt so sad over her leaving. As a sort of farewell party Bonnie and I took her out to dinner and then to see "Sinbad." It was a good show for that purpose, because it will be a long time before Nan will ever see another such. Toward the last she began to realize that, after Terre Haute, she was going even farther away from things; she was almost sorry that she had given up the six months of good city times she might have had. When she gets out to Arizona she will look back on Washington as a sort of big Jack Horner's pie. And whenever Nan stuck in her thumb she pulled out a pretty fair sample of a plum, good friends, (Continued on Ninth Page.)